

Inmates Bringing Bikes Back to Life

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"The offenders are putting their time behind bars to good use by rebuilding broken bicycles, which are then distributed to children and adults in need"

Commissioner J. David Donahue

They're not exactly Santa's elves, but inmates at the state prison in Michigan City are helping to brighten up Christmas Day and the rest of the year for children across the state.

The offenders are putting their time behind bars to good use by rebuilding broken bicycles, which are then distributed to children and adults in need, according to Indiana Department of Correction Superintendent J. David Donahue.

The year-old Shifting Gears program received a boost recently in the form of an initial \$1,000 grant from the Central Indiana Bicycling Association Foundation.

The money will be used to purchase bicycle parts to keep the program free of tax dollars, Donahue said.

Donahue, a bicycle enthusiast, said he saw the opportunity for the program after noticing police departments housing lost and stolen bicycles, and after learning bikes are no longer welcome in landfills.

Eight offenders are currently employed in the effort at Michigan City, said Indiana State Prison Superintendent Ed Buss.

The program provides inmates with a job and helps build self worth, he said. But the inmates also gain something they likely did not have when they arrived at prison, he said.

"It teaches them to be good citizens," Buss said.

Anyone interested in receiving refurbished bicycles or donating bikes in need of repair are encouraged to

contact prison Community Services Director Gus Carlson at 219-874-7256, extension 1550.

About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.

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